Magnets of Despair
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1 Chronicles 17:14: *But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.*

Chapter 1

Nelson MacDonald for the past 20 years had been touring Europe. Today he was returning to the house where he was born. It was just outside of Glasgow. This was due to the fact that both his parents had passed away. His mother outlived his father by a decade; she had recently been laid to rest. The local Minister wrote to Nelson telling him to come home.

Ten years ago, Nelson left Scotland to become a writer. He had been all over Europe, in search of his destiny. He eventually ended up in Lisbon where he lived with a street artist. Patricia did not want to travel back to Scotland with him. She had heard that it rained a lot there. Patricia sensing he was going home, decided to head off to India to study Buddhism.

"That's what they are like, these foreign women. They swing from one branch to another," he complained, as he handed the taxi driver a £20 note.

"Thanks. I will give you a hand with your case, sir."

All the way from the airport, the fat, unshaven, taxi driver, never stopped talking. When he heard that his passenger was a writer, he told him all about the book he wanted to write. The book had even been given a title: *Underworld City*. Like all men of the world, he knew that to become rich and famous you had to get

in with the right people, before doing anything about it. The product he reckoned was not all that important.

As he watched the budding author open the gate and walk towards his small four in a block flat, the taxi driver shouted after him: "You should join the Mafia, if you want to get your book published."

Nelson looked at the weeds along the path, and smiled to himself: "You may be right, there, my friend."

Outside the door, Nelson paused for a moment; he rested his little trolley case up against the wall. "Now where did I put the house key."

He put his hand in his pocket for the envelope; Nelson knew he had put it in there somewhere. When he was abroad the envelope was transferred to a hidden compartment in his case.

Then this morning before leaving Lisbon, he transferred the key back to his jacket pocket: "Now where did I put it."

Eventually, he found it inside his tweed jacket pocket. The envelope in the daylight, he noticed was worn with time. The writer was fascinated by time; he knew that it affected all material. With one click the door was opened. As Nelson made his way inside, he felt the mail being pushed back behind on the floor. Once inside, the author pulled his little trolley case up one step and into the dull hallway. He could not help but sense the stale smell in the atmosphere that begged for a window to be opened.

At first, he did not recognise the paint on the wall, or the wallpaper; it all looked so different. However, when he switched on the hall light, everything came back to him in a flash. The long colourful flatwoven rug carpet on the floor, the little table with the phone on it, the stool that furnished the dark hallway.

The story about his early life was now very much part of him again. Nelson recognised where he was. It was a strange thing the way time disappeared, then came back at you again. "The past, where did it go to? How does it come back to you again?" were to him unanswered questions.

Nelson had always been fascinated by things unseen; he knew they affected him. The past he knew came from a strange source;

he knew it could pass through walls, playgrounds and forest fields. Wherever it came from, it seemed to be everywhere now. Nelson looked around him; he knew there was no one there, but he felt a friendly feeling from somewhere. It was strange, he saw a boy running down the hallway to meet him. In a flash, the image was gone, but he knew who it was. Nelson was home.

Presently, he went into the living room, and opened the curtains as wide as he could. Then he sat down on the comfortable chair by the fireplace. Nelson remembered it was part of the sofa suite, they got from aunty Mary. She was a kind aunt. She brought the highland tradition down to Glasgow with her. She married his uncle after meeting him at the dancing.

Sitting there, he even remembered when his uncle was single. On a Sunday, as a boy, Nelson climbed the stairs of his house. He could hardly reach the keyhole to put the key in. It was always the same: Uncle Ian was lying in bed. Maybe the key to his house was still behind the door; for that was where they kept it. Dad he remembered used to say to him: "Uncle Ian will have been out with his pals last night; he will be having a long lie after the dancing. He will need you to get some things for him."

Uncle Ian was a very smart man. Though when he had been out dancing the night before with his pals, he always looked worst for wear the next day. Every Sunday, it was the same request: he had to buy him 20 Players plain cigarettes, and a bottle of lemonade, or cream soda. He had to go to the shop Carters, to get them there. Nelson always got a marvellous tip for doing this. The local shop was not faraway, just down the hill on the right-hand side. It was the first shop in the group of shops there. All the way down the road, Nelson remembered he always held the money tight in his hand. It was quite an adventure, you know, for a little boy.

It all came back to him, early in the morning, he would leave his house and go down the road to see his uncle. He was told that the condition his uncle was in, affected most single men. He would understand his plight when he was older. After opening his uncle's door, he climb the stairs and go up to his bedroom. Lying there his

uncle would give him some money from a drawer by his bedside. The cigarettes and the lemonade had always to be delivered right away. Nelson knew that it was a matter of urgency; he should get back to uncle Ian as quickly as possible with the goods. After money had been exchanged at the shop and goods received, he did not hang about.

Nelson loved to sit on the edge of his bed and watch him drink the fizzy stuff from the bottle. He would always light a cigarette right away. It was as if this was his medicine, he was taking. Another way to bring him round was to give him a shampoo. This did not involve wetting his hair though, but rubbing it, making it a complete mess. He was sparse on top, but unashamed about it becoming disordered. His life he remembered seemed freer than dad's, at that time, but in a strange way more vulnerable. He was a happy man who liked to bet, and go to the pub, and read the morning paper every day, which he always got delivered. His uncle was a manager in a printing firm, and at weekends a part-time reporter, with a well known newspaper in town, reporting on junior football matches. He had been very lucky: for he had not taken strong drink until he came out of the army. The Second World War called all fit men to serve. Uncle Ian became a PT instructor with the military police, and later one of Montgomery's outriders. After he married Mary from the Highlands, he settled down.

"Funny how a settee can remind you of someone you loved."

Wherever he went in this small flat, Nelson sensed the past, waiting to be explored. What had been of course, had long passed away. In a strange sense, he understood life differently now: how it was made up, and how it could reappear again. He could not determine any of it, but in a mysterious way he understood it. There was a time in life when what had been could no longer be seen, but was still inherent in the world around you. Yes, the never-ending past was always there somewhere. It revealed itself to those who looked for it. There was no doubt about that.

Nelson went to work. He soon got the house into reasonable shape. It was a lonely time, but one he did not mind. On his way

into town at the end of the week, at the bottom of the hill, he met someone who knew him. She was ordinary looking. He noticed that she had that lovely Scottish characteristic of being fixed to the earth - working class they used to call it - not from a privileged background, but better than the rest. She stopped him and said that she remembered him at high school.

"Nelson MacDonald! You have not changed much," she said, staring at him.

The woman was a lot older looking than him; she mentioned his sister's name, and maintained that she had been in the same class as her. At first, he could not place her. Then it all came back to him. She was the daughter of the sailor who dad knew. Out on the street, you did not have to look far to find the past; it was right there in front of you. Few people knew how to understand time like Nelson MacDonald. She could see that he had changed. His fascination about time, however, did not reveal itself to her.

Nelson MacDonald gave the impression that he was a man pressing on into the future. As they chatted, he kept an eye out for the bus. He knew that it would come from the direction of the country. Any bus coming this way would take him to the city centre of Glasgow. Even though he had lived here before, everything was new to him again. It was wonderful! He listened to the names, dates and places, she rhymed off. The dates did not move him, but the names of people and places brought back memories, especially the time when Biffo got expelled from school. He wondered what he was doing now.

Nelson was nearly fifty. He cared nothing for numbers. He knew the day moved at the same speed for everyone, though many thought otherwise. The rich man, and the poor man, could not change its course. Time was the same for ancient Egyptians, as for modern computer men. She told him that most people had moved away. She croaked: "There's still a few old cronies left, but most people here are strangers now."

Nelson had guessed this; he did not really expect it to be any other way. He may have been born here, but he was not a familiar figure. The people in their cars he noticed looked out at him; he

thought one or two of them may remember him from going into Glasgow, when he was a teenager. He accepted the fact that he was a stranger in the place where he had been born. To many that would be terrible; Nelson accepted it. The thing that jumped out at him after visiting Glasgow was how unhappy people were.

When he returned to his small flat late in the afternoon, he wondered why this had come about. He reminded himself. "Life will always be like that." He did not deny that God existed. In fact, he was sure he did. The question that puzzled him was: "Why are people so unhappy?"

In Scotland, there was no obvious reason for them to be so unhappy. They decorated themselves to the hilt with jewellery. They bought and drove big fancy cars. They stayed in good houses. They dressed in expensive clothes. They eat in fine restaurants. They went to faraway places for holidays. They multiplied. They had pets to entertain them. Every day they bought gadgets to amuse themselves.

"So why are they so unhappy?"

This question came on him all of a sudden. It was as if it was lying in wait for him. While travelling abroad, he was an outsider looking in. Nelson did not pay much attention to the way people behaved in Portugal, Italy or Spain. After all, he was not born there. He did not question their culture. However, he did notice wherever he went in life, no matter the country, the majority of people tried their best to make the best of things.

Even though the flat was in reasonable shape, Nelson knew what had to be done to the small apartment. The walls and ceilings needed painting. The carpets, although old, needed a good scrubbing. Nelson started to plan ahead. Even before the first lick of paint went on, it felt like his own home; he was thankful for that. During his travels throughout Europe, Nelson somehow became a practical man. As a teenager, he was wayward. He was not one to plan ahead. When he was young, Nelson was always out, when he should have been helping his dad with the house. In fact, when he lived here in this house, life forces had dragged him all over the place. Before he started work on the house, he looked

out of the living room window. It was a familiar scene to him. The house opposite reminded him of the family who had lived there: "I wonder what they are doing now. They have no doubt moved away."

What had frightened him in the past may have been real at that time: violence on the streets, but it did not hold him anymore. It interested him, but it did not hold him. The past was over; it had been dealt with. What was fascinating was that it was there everywhere around him, even though it had passed away. His parents, no longer here on earth, were just as real to him as they were living beyond the sun. That was strange was it not? Nelson realised that through grace, they had given him a good upbringing. He was thankful for that. When they were here, he kept in touch with them. Even though he was abroad a lot, he returned at times to look after them.

As he turned from the window, he fondly remembered his dad lying on the couch there, waiting for the end. He always had a kind word and a smile for him, or for anyone else, for that matter, who came into the house. Mother too had been steadfast until the end, giving thanks for the things she received during her life. She held no grudges.

Nelson smiled as he put the picture of his dad up in the hallway. He looked so smart in his army uniform; he always did. He was a soldier in the Second World War. The picture he chose for his mother was one of her as a young single woman, taken probably in a studio in Glasgow. She looked almost regal. He stared at her for a moment or two, and wondered where she had bought her hat, broach, jacket and blouse from. Nelson smiled as he placed the photo on the little table in the hall.

It took a few weeks to get everything in order. Nelson left his mother's bedroom alone; he would attend to it later: for he was sleeping in the other one. This was the bedroom where he had been born.

Chapter 2

Nelson had been born again after his soul had been broken by a foreign woman. He laughed about it now, but not then. "Foreign women certainly have strange ways," he was always joking to himself. "Everything you know, they try to rip up."

His faith kept him straight though; he was thankful for that. He prayed every morning, thereafter when he was moved to do so. He loved praying. It had a wonderful effect upon him. His dad was not one to talk to him about religion, to him that was the job of the preacher. However, he did remember his dad talking to him about life. He always spoke about it in plain and simple terms.

Nelson was feeling good about being back home. It was a fresh start for him. When out at the local shops, he met some old friends. The ones who had stayed, he noticed had one thing in common: no desire to leave the local area. They of course, like him, had changed. They seemed to be doing all right. He knew they were all from working-class backgrounds. Many were now contemplating a life of never working again; this after having being paid off. They seemed to be part of a new phenomenon: people who had worked, but will never do so again. Some were given redundancy payments: "Roll on retirement day," one local man said to him.

Over the last decade, Nelson had been back and forward to his parents' house, looking after them. He never thought about the area, and what changes were taking place there. When you don't live somewhere you tend not to do that. The one thing that stood out now, that he was living here again, was that the community did not seem to know each other, the way they had before.

It came to light, there was to be a referendum. The date was 18 September, 2015. The question put to the electorate was: Should Scotland be an independent country?

As the weeks passed by, Nelson, of course, heard things on TV, and read things in the press. He put off thinking about how to vote. However, when he looked at the calendar, it seemed to sober him up: for there was only two weeks to go. He should start thinking about it - should he not. It would soon be on him.

The calendar also reminded him of other things. It was the beginning of a new month; he should buy the messages in, for the next four weeks. Nelson looked out his little trolley case to put them in. He did this when he lived abroad. It was on the way to the train station, just before the roundabout that a small bald man, crossed the road. He was dressed in all black, and had a yellow badge with a black logo on his lapel jacket. He could see he was around his age. The burly fellow came up to him and handed him a blue leaflet with a white: *Yes*, on it.

At first, the man did not speak, then he asked him in a furtive tone: "Are you undecided about the referendum?"

The fellow, as if to sway him, right away used local jargon. He cracked: "Let's get rid of those English bastards."

Nelson looked at the leaflet again, then at his round white face. There was nothing on the leaflet apart from the word *Yes*. Nothing much to go on. And there was not much written on his face either, so he just smiled at him.

Seeing that his brash tone did not work, the man asked him again: "Have you made your mind up?"

He took it he was talking about the referendum: "No, not yet."

Nelson had a good sense of humour: "You?"

The man did not answer, or even smile. He could see that he was thinking what to say next. Nelson wondered if he knew him, before he left the area. He asked his name.

"Sammy."

Nelson thought to himself: "No, I don't remember you."

He must have moved into the area after Nelson moved out. To cool his anger, Nelson quipped in a cheeky tone: "I have heard all about you, Separatist Sammy! How's the campaign going?"

The activist could see that the man he had stopped understood the language of the street; he knew how to put someone down using Glasgow patter. Nevertheless, as they walked on together, he quoted from another leaflet he had in his hand: "It is now or never. It is a once in a lifetime chance."

Nelson could see that he was not a Scot of many generations. He was to him a man without an authentic connection to the land under his feet. He guessed that he was knowledgeable about its history though. Like most citizens in the modern world, the land of the Scots - his homeland - was learnt via television and from other unreal outlets.

Nelson knew that Scotland had been free from trouble, not because of television and media personalities, but due to the tolerance of its people. Of course, when he lived here - like everyone else - he read articles and listened to the media. After all, you could not escape them. Nelson understood that there were four things important to forming a state: a defined territory; a permanent population; a government, and a capacity to enter into relations with other states.

It was the last of these that Sammy wanted to discuss with him. After listening to him, Nelson asked: "So, what currency are you proposing to use?"

"It does not matter what we use. We can use dominoes, if we like."

Nelson was not chapping, and he asked him again: "What are you, the separatists, proposing to use as a currency?"

"We will use the English pound?"

"Can you do that: for in the event of an Independent Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will be separate from you?"

"I told you man, we can use anything. We founded the bloody bank; it was a Scot from Dumfriesshire: William Paterson."

"Yes, Dumfries is not far from England. What are the rest of the UK saying?"

"You know what they are like."

"Why should they underwrite your debt?"

There was a long pause, then Sammy cried: "To hell with them!"

Nelson knew from reading that in the event of Scotland becoming a separate state, the headquarters of the banks, operating on behalf of the taxpayer of the UK, would leave Scotland and control would be secured by the Bank of England in London. It was not difficult to understand what would happen if the separatists used sterling.

"So it would be a pariah currency, you would use then?"

Sammy had heard the leader of the separatists many times fend off the commentators by claiming that it was as much Scotland's pound, as the other three nations.

"We will get a deal with them; they do too much trade with us to do anything about it."

This was the main hope of the separatists: for the introduction of a Scottish pound would ring alarm bells in the ears of investors and savers.

The thought that you may go to bed one night with £1000 in the bank, and when the new Scottish pound came into circulation in the morning, you may only have £500, unnerved people. Of course, when this was put to the separatists on line, they claimed that you could wake up richer: for Scotland was the fourteenth richest nation in the world?

"It's Scotland's oil!" was the chant.

Sammy had taken on the ways of his leader of bluff and bluster tactics, and with a swagger he said: "We will be all right."

"With no agreement on currency, you are hardly likely to attract mass investment, are you?"

"They need us as much as we need them. It is our pound as much as theirs."

Nelson had travelled extensively, and was familiar with the Euro. He knew that you could use it, and not be a member of the European community. "Why not use the Euro?" he suggested.

This did not go down well with separatist Sammy: "We can use anything, Bitcoins, if we like."

So that was it on currency: a pariah pound, the Euro, or Bitcoins.

"What about Europe?"

Sammy was keen to promote the cause, so he walked with Nelson towards the station. He said in an upbeat tone: "We will still be in Europe."

"You won't have to leave, due to the fact that you will have to reapply?"

"We'll get back in pretty quickly."

"How will you do that?"

"I told you, we are the fourteenth richest nation in the world.

"Who says so?"

"We do."

Nelson read on the BBC website that the separatists used the statistics from the UK office, and put them into their manifesto.

On Sunday, the President of the European Union was on television. He stated: If Scotland came out of the European Union, they would have to reapply for membership of the European community. And their application would have to be accepted by all member states, before they were allowed back in. He thought it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible to get everyone to agree. He cited Kosovo, and how they seceded, and did not get into the EU after doing so.

Well, that was that: if there was to be a '*Yes*' vote, Scotland would have a pariah pound, they would be out of Europe, for a handful of years, maybe indefinitely. It was pretty clear to him that with no agreement, it was more than likely that the pariah pound

would soon turn into a Euro; the Scots would have to take it. He knew there was a two-year period set out, so that the changeover could be managed effectively.

As soon as they got to the shops, opposite the train station, Nelson noticed men and women promoting what they thought was the best way forward for the country to go. One camp had set up a table with lots of leaflets and badges on it saying '*Yes*" and the other had done the same with the '*No*' campaign.

Sammy ran over and joined the band standing outside the supermarket. They were of course the separatists, part of the campaign promoting a *Yes* vote. Just before Nelson crossed the road to go down for the train, he heard someone shouting at the *Yes* men and women: "Have you got a currency yet?"

Some banter followed. This brought the opposing factions to life. They all seemed to groan and say something at the same time. Nelson could not make out what was said. When the noise had died down a middle-aged grey-haired woman, from behind the table, tried to answer the question. She said in a lovely Kelvinside accent, "Oh, yes, we are going to use the British pound."

"Oh, you are!" the passerby retorted in the same posh accent. Then he immediately switched back to his everyday coarse voice: "I can tell you've got plenty of money!"

Nelson noticed the *No* camp standing outside the bakery. They had a table in front of them too, and were giving out badges. Which way should Nelson vote?

"Should I vote Yes, or should I vote No?"

He still had time to think about it, and make up his mind. Nelson MacDonald would keep an eye out to see what was happening elsewhere.

Chapter 3

On the train, Nelson sat down beside a man with a ponytail and tartan bunnet. He could see he was wearing a *Yes* badge on his denim jacket. He looked like a cross between an ageing hippy and a gardner.

Nelson smiled at him: "I see you have made up your mind already, about the big decision."

The man in the bottleneck glasses stared at him. His eyes were large, due to the magnification of the glasses. "We are Scottish," he said in a rough accent. "We are the tartan army."

Nelson had been born in Scotland, and understood the culture. He knew there had always been an anti-English sentiment among some of its citizens. They were funny; it was as if they were playing at football every week against the old enemy. Nelson's dad fought in the Second World War. When he was young, he remembered that when Scotland played England, his regiment always came up for the game at Hampden Park, and the Scots all went to Wembley, London, the following year for the same fixture. Needless to say, there was rivalry, but no bitter animosity. After all, they had fought a war together. The sixties generation was a rebel generation; full of hostility for just about everything. Nelson noted that the separatists had fed their hatred into the community, by

blaming the English for everything. The two were similar. He knew that this would suit some, not others. It was strange though, they never turned their anger on the other nations, within the Kingdom. They did not do the same with the Welsh or the Irish. It was always the English that got it.

Nelson knew that in 1977, Scottish fans from that generation invaded the park, after a game at Wembley, and broke the goal posts in a drunken rage: "Do the tartan army still hate the English?"

"We want to be a nation again," the man said, this time in an angry Glasgow accent.

Nelson remembered his school history. He put this to the man: "It was over 300 years ago the union of England and Scotland took place. That was when we became a single kingdom."

"We want self-government."

This was the basis for the Scottish National Party. Although they were called the Scottish National Party, they were really a separatist movement.

The man in the ponytail, and tartan bunnet, admitted to Nelson that he was a mad fan of the national team. He went everywhere to see them. He did not say if he had been on the park at Wembley though. He was old enough to have been there, but Nelson did not ask him. Instead, he listened as the man went through the same arguments as Sammy the separatist, about the different aspects of the campaign. He also added other interesting issues. He felt that the nuclear defence system should be abandoned, Trident, as well as an unfair tax called the Bedroom tax.

When they got to Central Station, Nelson felt as if he had been browbeaten by the man sitting next to him. He looked around the train as if to empathise with someone; he could see one or two others had the *Yes* badge on. Nelson thought he was funny. The whole carriage could hear him. How could someone be so nationalistic? It was bizarre. It is what you expected in South Africa, or some Middle East countries. The silent majority did not

seem interested in him, so he could not share the joke with them. Nelson thought that this was unusual: for the Scots he knew had a good sense of humour. Presently, everyone got up and alighted the train.

It was plain to see that Glasgow had changed radically since the time he had been going in and out of it, way back in the eighties. It was now a modern European city, with hardly anything left from the past. All the old bars were gone; the restaurants he could see were all the same now: corporate, modern, and clean. Nelson looked at the shops and, after buying some toiletries, he went for a coffee. The cafe he chose was on St Vincent Street. It was one of the new coffee outlets that offered caffe latte, hot chocolate, sandwiches and cartons of porridge. It was there sitting at the window, he met a man and his wife. They had travelled throughout the world, and now decided to come back and stay in Scotland. She was originally from Glasgow; he was from Greece. Although he was Greek, he spoke in a mild American accent.

After chatting about the weather, and the cafe bar they were in, the man picked up his coffee and asked Nelson in a cheery tone: "So how are you voting?"

Nelson wondered if it was possible to get away from the question: "I am not sure," he said looking at a man passing by on the street. "I myself am just back from abroad, from Lisbon."

"I am voting to separate," said the man, in an easygoing tone.

On the historic vote, his wife he could see was not with him. After a moment or two, she confirmed this: "I am voting the other way?' she said with a worried look.

This was like no other ballot. It was to be a once in a lifetime opportunity. The decision could not be undone, like an election. If the country voted to leave, Scotland would be on their own for hundreds of years.

This did not seem to concern the man, but it did the woman. So, Nelson put to him the obvious question: "Is it worth it to go it alone?"

The characters were starting to take shape in his mind. Apart from fanatics, he reckoned disillusioned people would probably be

drawn to the separatists' camp, as well as unhappy people, risk takers and pressure groups. The man from Greece was a risk taker. He confirmed this, moments later, when he told him what he was up to: "I am retired now; I play the stock exchange on line."

It was more difficult to formulate the people who would vote to stay in the union. They were not prominent, out on the streets, in your face, waving flags, shouting out of car windows, or putting posters up outside people's homes. They were the silent majority.

Nelson chatted with the couple. He was becoming interested in the subject. He was starting to understand the dynamics of the debate. Nelson noticed the man attached other questions and other issues, the way the man did from the Tartan army, and Sammy the separatist. This of course was to enforce the argument that Scotland would be better off as a separate country.

As they sat there, the man confirmed the important issues he felt made it all worthwhile for him to vote *Yes*: the unfair bedroom tax, the poor people who have to use food banks, the money spent on the Nuclear deterrent, and possibility of the privatisation of the NHS. His wife did not do this. She was much more aware than he was that these important issues would come and go from the front pages of the newspapers and television networks. It was a fundamental question they were being asked, and one that had to be taken on trust. The issues of the present day were certainly important and interesting, but they were not dominant as regards: should Scotland become an independent country? For they would surely change as the world did.

"Are you going to listen to the debate tonight?" asked the woman.

"Is there one on?"

"Oh, yes, the leaders of the main parties are all on. I think it is at nine o'clock."

Her husband nodded that this was true, and obviously thought it was worth adding: "There's been quite a few of them."

"Should I watch it?" wondered Nelson. He made them laugh by adding: "Am I brave enough?"

That night after writing emails to friends abroad, and buying some products online, Nelson remembered about what the couple had said to him in the cafe bar. It was apparent from watching the televised debate that there was a power struggle going on. It was the usual thing, of course. Someone always came across as if they knew what they were talking about, while the opponent was always trying to trip them up.

Tonight there was a wee fat man representing the separatists; the other was a silver-haired man representing the union. They both made opening statements, then it was on to the currency. The wee fat man wanted the people to give him the mandate to break away, ditch the other countries, and negotiate and get a deal using what he thought was the best option for the aforementioned separate state: namely the one that he was told he would have to give up: the UK pound. The silver haired-man stood by the record of the union; he proposed to continue using the pound in a union with the other three countries: Northern Ireland, Wales, and England.

The debate was quite passionate, but what shown through was that the separatist leader did not have a contingency plan for not keeping the UK pound. On Europe it was plain to see that no one really knew how, or when, an independent Scotland would be reunited with the other 26 nations. This subterfuge would have been fair enough if you wanted to throw off a corrupt state like one in the Balkans or Central America, but the English and the Irish and Welsh were fine people. Things were starting not to add up.

The programme went on its weary way. On the economy, the silver haired man relayed what the position was from a factual point of view: for he made it known that he was chancellor of the exchequer during a time of great uncertainty. While the other man went on about what he thought was possible in the new country after it seceded. The past, that everyone knew about from experience, was up against the dreams of what a political party thought was possible. It was not difficult to understand their

positions: staying in the union, or what the outcome would be of leaving it.

One thing he noticed watching the public debates, the separatists, when they could not answer a particular question would say to whoever it was asking the question, that they would contact them after the show ended. They may indeed contact them after the show had ended, but he knew they would soon forget them, and the problem would only be compounded by the fact that nothing would happen. Nelson knew that unhappy people were at the mercy of clever political people: the Magnates of Despair.

Nelson when he was younger had liked politics, that is until he had direct experience with the elected members. He noticed they never did what you asked of them. He thereafter kept clear of them. He called them Magnets of Despair. They drew you towards them, then left you on your own. It was quite a thing the way they did it. He did notice though, in their company, they loved division. This is what they were always on the lookout for. Poison was the greatest substance for change. It was obvious that as soon as a citizen was betrayed, they came over to them. Citizens thought their elected members had the power to save them. The latter listened carefully when they spoke to them in surgeries, and in television studios; they could tell when a question came from a bitter source. Elected members knew that the media could make people sick with worry about the state of the country. They would drive them towards them.

It was clear from listening to the debate, and speaking to the separatists, what they were all about. Nelson felt they were on the road to nowhere. Moreover, they were not telling the people the truth what would be the outcome of a separate state: a change of currency and no monarchy. The first would in his view bring about financial insecurity. The latter a civil war.

That evening Nelson went back into Glasgow, to a nice cafe bar in West Nile Street. When he was in town during the day, he passed by; it looked an interesting place. He bought himself a glass of wine and sat by the window. Nelson watched the traffic go

down towards the centre of town. He could not help but think how things had changed. A few minutes later into this cafe bar waddled a burly man, dressed in a dark suit. The strange thing about him was he looked attached to something at the bar. The unseen force was pulling him towards it. Nelson overheard the woman at the next table say to the man she was with: "He works for that separatist newspaper; he is the political correspondent."

Nelson could see the bar was different from others in the city; for it was such that famous people were ignored. They could sit at the bar and drink, and talk until they were called upon by their respective offices, lovers or associates. This was no doubt why the man in the dark suit frequented it. Nelson knew political correspondents, no matter who they worked for the world over, tried to give the impression that they knew what was good for the people. They were their guardians, not only of their souls, but their wallets too. They had the power to build politicians up, and bring them down. It came to light that this chap was doing quite well at the moment; he was pleasing his editor no end by his street credibility on the referendum. He was even appearing on television; no doubt he had friends in society, backing the *Yes* campaign. They were all being patriotic to the idea of a new country. As he sat down on a stool at the bar, someone in the bar quoted to him from his column in this morning's newspaper: "*The mad Gadarene dash to Scotland of the Westminster elite, I am voting yes.* What is this all about*?*"

What was not clear in this statement was his religious beliefs: for the use of the word Gadarene origin was about the devil being sent into pigs and off over the cliff. As far as members of parliament making a trip to save the union - was it not their entitlement to do that. How strange the media were. Journalists in the modern world ran the campaigns for the politicians. They hoped the public would follow what they wrote. It is fair to say most hacks were tied to their editors. Editors were hired and fired by their owners. It did not take a lot to work out what was going on. There were few journalists who could seek the truth, and fewer still who could write about it. An independent man or woman who

sought the truth, and wrote about it, was one in a million. Not every city had one.

The television was even more bizarre; slick clever presenters tried to trip people up rather than get at the truth. They wanted to appear clever rather than honest. Television was nothing more than theatre - that's all it was. It was not even a good night out. Moreover, there was nothing empirical about it. No one could form a true opinion on anything they saw, or heard on television, though many were hypnotised by it, and did so. Television was nothing more than entertainment for the masses. You cannot argue with a television set; not everyone knew that. It was better to laugh at it. No matter who you were, or what job you had in life, you had to investigate the issues for yourself. You had to look at the facts, dismiss what was false, and put forward your view when the time came. This was part of the theory of forms that went back to Plato and Socrates. Truth was innate. The majority of modern politicians had little or no real experience of life, beyond the university. In the modern world how much dirt you could dish, and how much intense pressure you could endure, was a sign you were politically aware.

The other thing that fascinated Nelson was how the press ran a campaign in favour of this, or that candidate. It was always the same: there was always someone presented in the media as smarter than the rest; they were given an easy ride, while they were on the wave. However, as soon as they fell from grace, they were crucified, ridiculed, and treated with complete contempt. It was as if after falling from grace, they could never in a thousand years find redemption.

The press knew they could destroy anyone, as long as they read their columns and looked at their photographs. Nelson certainly listened to people talking in cafe bars, as well as on the street, or on public transport. Of course, he read the press and listened to the radio and watched TV too, but he was different. Nelson would seek out the spirit of truth, and thereafter decide what he should do about the momentous decision that he was

going to have to make: Should Scotland be an independent country?

Nelson bought light blue trousers in one of the large department stores in town. He did not realise they were open so late. This was to go with his jean shirt he bought many years ago in Frasers. Then he headed back for the train.

When he got inside the carriage of the train, Nelson noticed a group of youngsters. It reminded him of his youth, and how he and his pals travelled together to and from the city. Seeing that they had Scottish flags with them, he thought at first they had been to a football match. They seemed friendly enough, so he sat opposite them. He was wrong; it was apparent they had been to a separatist rally. This was very strange to him: for youngsters were usually pretty good at seeing through political people, and avoiding their campaigns. Teenagers did not really get caught in the trap until life had disillusioned them. The Magnets of Despair did not usually attract the attention of bright young things. As he was sitting quite near them, he said to a young fellow: "I see you have been to a rally. Are you voting Yes or No?"

There was a silence, as the three young men and the girl looked at each other. Suddenly, the lad with long dark hair snapped back: "Yes! What are you voting?"

"I have not made up my mind yet."

Having fond memories of being a young teen in this city, Nelson smiled at them. The young girl must have recognised this, and she responded in a friendly manner: "We have just been to a debate inside the university."

"You don't like the English?" Nelson teased her: "Would you not say the Welsh, the Irish and the English are good neighbours?"

This prompted the young lad with the black hair to say: "We get conservative governments when we don't vote for them. The girl beside him must have been listening to the commentators too; for she spoke like one: "We can make Scotland a more fairer and prosperous country by voting *Yes*."

When he got off the train, Nelson saw Sammy the separatist. Sammy never acknowledged him though. He just walked by,

staring at the ground. He noticed his face severe and blanched. He looked as if he was fed up campaigning.

"Hi Sammy," Nelson said to him, as he went by.

Nelson went home and made something to eat, but the question kept niggling at him: "How should I vote?"

Chapter 4

Needless to say another debate was on TV. Every night now, the news was dominated by the referendum; the papers too. Nelson turned off the debate and switched on the radio, and lo and behold on came someone talking about it. "What a drag. Is there anyway I can avoid it?" he said switching it off.

Nelson read that there was to be a march through Glasgow on Saturday, before the day of decision. He bumped into an old-school friend that day on the train. She recognised him right away: "You have not changed, Nelson MacDonald," she said smiling as she sat down beside him.

She confirmed that there was indeed to be a procession through the city by the separatists. Nelson remembered her. She was in the same year as him at secondary school. She told him a little about her life, and more about her new job in the property market. She seemed to be doing well. Her daughter now living on the other side of the world was missed of course. She found it strange living in the same big house without her. The referendum was not far away though from her thoughts: "It's madness! People are asking us to put their homes up for sale, if there is a *Yes* vote."

Selling houses for a large Scottish property company, she understood the market pretty well. "There are many people out of here, in the event of Scotland going it alone."

Nelson sympathised: "You can't blame them, can you."

That got him thinking again: what would happen if there was a *Yes* vote. It was confirmed in a newspaper that morning that there was to be a two-year period of transition. This is when companies would no doubt decide to relocate, or not as the case maybe. Ordinary people would do the same: decide if they wanted to stay or up sticks and go. The understanding of say a drop in the price of oil; the main revenue for income to an independent country, along with uncertainty in the currency, would certainly lead to chaos and confusion. He noticed that this was laughed off by the separatists.

Many people would have to decide what was best for their families. Of course, who is to say that in 50 years time Scotland would come out of it. Most people had a lifetime view of what the wanted from their country. However, in the interim, it was fair to say that going from a united kingdom to a separate state would be chaos. Most people would have moved on by that time in one way or another.

The Scotsman newspaper had an article in their paper saying that there was a: *Republican plot to ditch the Queen after Yes vote*. To Nelson, this was more troubling than anything else. For in the event of the above, it was plain to see that an upheaval not seen since 1939 would occur in every sector of society. An independent Scotland, with a pariah currency, euro, or dollar, would be one of revolution, for the following reasons: the secularists would give the sovereignty to the people. In this event the people would tear at it. The foundation of church and state, with the monarch being defender of the faith would be in dispute, and that would open up the Irish question: republicans and royalists going at it as they did after the Irish civil war.

The next morning things became much clearer to Nelson; it was a huge risk to go it alone. The other thing that made his mind up was after reading about the Irish civil war on the Internet. The

parallel was striking: anti British sentiment followed by a religious divide. This should be avoided at all costs.

Nelson that Saturday picked up a blue badge outside the mini supermarket from the *No* campaign. He knew one or two local faces standing there: the son of a councillor, church elder, and retired teacher. There was no sign of Sammy this morning. Even though Nelson was not into politics; he had to act. This issue was beyond politics. He pinned the small *NO Thanks* badge to his herringbone jacket, crossed the road, and walked towards the train station.

On the train the phrase kept coming back to him again and again: Magnets of Despair. Wasn't that what they were. There were people out there who wanted to draw you to their cause through despair. When you listened to them you were in a worst state than before. Of course, it was all for the cause. You had to put up with them. If truth be told the Magnets of Despair were everywhere in life. They were in every party. The only problem with this issue was that a vote for separation would be cataclysmic: no agreement on currency; no agreement on Europe; no agreement on church and state. And no return to what you once had.

It was outside Central station that Nelson was stopped by a woman with long silver-white hair. She wore a blue teeshirt and had in her hand a clipboard. She stopped him and turned the first page so that he could read it: "Are you unsure of how to vote?" Then she spoke to him: "Would you like to have a chat, dear?" she invited him to stop under the canopy where she was standing.

She was a respectable looking middle aged woman, but there was something amiss. Even though Nelson had made up his mind on how he was voting, he would listen to what she had to say.

She flipped the foolscap page over to reveal another heading in bold type: Would Scotland be better off running its own affairs? If we control our own affairs, do you think we will be better off?

Nelson read it and smiled at her. He thought to himself what he should say, then asked her: "How would we be better off?"

There were other pages he noticed that had other questions, relating to this referendum: Should Scotland be an Independent country.

Although, she wore no badge something told him that she was a pal of Sammy the separatist. He guessed right. This was revealed when she flipped over to the last page. It said: Why not Vote *Yes*.

The woman was pretending to help people make up their minds, when she had only one thing in mind: to persuade them to vote *Yes*. She was not being honest. She was here in the city centre doing her bit for the separatists. Life was deceptive; people were strange. This issue had come about because of a separatist party, Nelson was not backing any political person or campaign. He did not like the Magnets of Despair. To him, the issue was beyond politics. It was one for the individual to affirm an agreement with other countries: England, N Ireland and Wales: the Union, or end it.

It was dreadful, they were on every night building themselves up on the backs of the poor, championing this or that cause, defaming others, pouring poison down the airwaves. They all gave the impression that they were part of a group. He knew that to be an individual you had to be strong, and avoid the herd. In the event of change, people would vote in, men and women, to represent them in a new parliament, which was due for election during the transfer period.

In the event of a Yes vote, it was known that the people would send their representatives there to the devolved parliament, which would, after the transition period, become the national government. It was at that point politics would come into play. Even though the information was there for people to read, the Magnets of Despair could not wait. They were jamming the airwaves every night, telling you how to think.

"If politicians stayed out of it, we would all be better off. Let the people decide," he told the woman with a smile, as he walked away.

Chapter 5

Nelson went into the city; he wanted to see who still went where. It was a long time since he had been in Glasgow at night. He wondered if he would bump into any of the old crowd, who used to do the rounds. At that time, there was always one place everyone went too. Of course, it changed from time to time, but He knew there was always a focal point for city dwellers . Some place, everybody knew about it, and everyone went to.

However, he soon found out the places he remembered had ether changed or had shut. As he walked along the crowded streets, he could not find one single place he knew. Then he remembered a cafe bar, way down at the bottom of Bath Street, near Charing Cross. He wondered if it was still going strong. The cafe bar was set off the road, opposite the railway station. It was a popular bar at weekends; someone always played the piano there, and usually someone got up to sing. It had a reputation as a well known haunt for theatre people, whose place of work was just round the corner.

The piano bar was quite quiet tonight; Nelson bought himself a half of beer. Standing there at the bar, he met two chaps. He could not help that: for they were the only two men standing opposite the coffee machine at the end of the bar. They

were about his age. He could see they were friendly; they stopped chatting to the waitress when he came in. As he waited for the barmaid to pour his beer, one of the men, a man with cropped hair recognised him. "You used to go to Panama Jacks. Your name is Nelson."

This was a very popular club about twenty years ago. Nelson did not recognised the fellow, or indeed his friend. He sensed quickly they were reasonable characters. In Glasgow, you had to determine this right away. The first inquiry was usually what religious persuasion the person was, even if they were not practising at the moment. This helped no end when talking to strangers. The man mentioned he was originally from Ireland. You were either one or the other in Glasgow, Republican or Protestant. He had not seen any of them before.

The Irishman brought names to the surface that they both remembered. Nelson could see that as they talked, about the past, the other fellow had no connection with the clubs, or the people of that time. It came to light that he had been married during this time, and although he nodded when he heard the names and the stories attached to his friend, he was not part of the invisible time that bound them.

It was obvious they had both done quite well in life. The writer's life, that Nelson pursued, was a great mystery to them. He could see in their faces that they could not understand why anyone in the world would follow an aesthetic course in life, rather than one secured by money and status. Literature was like religion to them, which had little or no bearing on their lives, even though they knew it trained the sights of many towards this or that course in life. Nelson could see he was a stranger in a familiar land, unaffected by the menace of the everyday "blah blah' culture, people liked to talk about.

Nelson could also see that the executive fellow, who was with the Irishman, was into his professional job as a sales rep, that he carried it with him to the bar. All that corporate training had made him superior in a very working class way. He was someone who had done well and could still mix with the common people.

He was now at an age where he could be confident and survey everything around him; master of his own destiny. He did this as if recording it for a court case or jury.

Nelson noticed that anyone who knew them, who came into the public bar, was offered a drink by either the executive or his friend. They did this quickly and without much fuss. On paying for the drinks, they both would bring out wads of notes to show how wealthy they were, to the barmaid and anyone else who may be looking on.

He thought a good name for them was the Shoo Shoo boys. Everything was done shoo shoo, with show, although it must be stressed not in a show business way. Everything was done quickly and without fuss, but not with theatre or much expression, which made it rather odd. He could not at first understand the connection between the two men. They were opposites, and it was really quite comical to watch them interact. The executive was positive to just about everything in life, while the other man was a happy pessimist, all life was defunct to him. To keep the peace, his executive friend went along with him.

Nelson could see that he was not like that. However, the golden era - the one which he knew Nelson from - was worth remembering. This was why he must have spoken to him in such a friendly manner. He spoke about the past, like historians do of ancient Greece or Rome. The past life of clubs, bars and pubs was a real treasure to him, gone but not forgotten. The night was interesting. The invisible past was brought back to life again. Nelson remembered many things.

It was strange for on reflection, the two men came from different tribes. However, he did note that they were both separatists. The Irish man, due to his anti British background, but the executive it was harder to see what drew him towards the separatists. As he made his way home, it became clear to Nelson that it was through the executive's association with the Irishman, and possibly others, that he had. Being part of the herd was very powerful and very persuasive. Then he recalled the executive said he had a daughter in the separatist party.

Everything fell into place for the writer. Nelson knew that once under the influence of the party it was hard to escape the Magnets of Despair. He had heard that activists were urging their members to stop paying the television licence so that revenue would be reduced to Westminster. They were filling the minds of the young with hate. This was their role. It was a strange cocktail: Westminster, food banks, the bedroom tax, the Trident missile system. Political parties varied as how much control they tried to exert over their members. Needless to say, poison was free for those who were angry.

When Nelson was a teenager, he knew very few people who were interested in politics. Now due to the referendum, everyone was into it: for it was a momentous decision. Thus they were at the mercy of pundits on TV every night, saying how bad things were for the poor. He could see that the television pundits quickly became celebrities on the backs of the poor, and most if not all had little or no interest in them.

Many people hated the poor due to the fact that something in them was poorer than the people they stared at on the street. Middle class Scots kept away from anyone different from them. Their maxim was: to escape becoming poor, you must avoid them. Poor people should not be at the mercy of political parties. He knew that those in the media tried to stir up trouble by highlighting their plight. He believed people should serve them, and help them wherever they can, and do so without seeking political fame or fortune for it.

Young people were different; their minds were easily captured by the media, and their representatives. Media gurus appeared on television every night and filled their minds with despair. However, after watching a documentary about how young people were going to vote; it was encouraging for Nelson to see that many of them had rejected the separatist call. They wanted to push out into the world; they wanted to be part of something bigger.

Nelson in his first job after leaving school had been in a trade union; he loved speaking at rallies. That night before going to bed he decided that he would go out onto the streets and persuade

people to stick together, and reject the call from the separatists. The danger was obvious: separation would bring about an upheaval, and an upheaval would bring about a civil war. The two factions facing each other inside one country. Nelson posted on Facebook his intention:

Why I am voting NO.
The media are quite right to flag up the Irish question, as regards the similarity between Scotland and Ireland. The parallels are nearly exact. In the event of Independence, the struggle would ensue for the identity of Scotland. With a pariah currency, and much uncertainty about, the scene would be set for an upheaval, and some sort of civil war would ensue. That indeed is Project Fear for everyone. Having to replace one system with another would take more than a decade. The two groups facing each other inside one country. No longer England the enemy for the separatists. Unionists, Republicans, believers and non believers, all thrown together to sort it out.
Having said that, the reason I am voting NO is that everyone, no matter their identity, flourishes in Scotland. We seem to be part of everything: UK, Europe, the World, and we travel well.

Chapter 6

As soon as he got into the Central Station, it was obvious that there was something special going on today. Glasgow city centre was electric with *Yes* campaigners, and their separatist banners. As he walked along Gordon Street, it was plain to see there were very few *No* campaigners out on the streets against them. After touring the city centre, Nelson understood that most of the *No* campaigners were congregated along Sauchiehall Street. They had a large table there on the precinct, and an office somewhere in the shopping centre. He noticed that the people handing out leaflets never drifted back into town.

After chatting to a writer named Robert Watson, Nelson picked up a bunch of Vote *No* leaflets off the table and headed back into the city centre. He walked in the direction of Buchanan Street. He felt within him that the *No* campaigners were too quiet, too polite. Nelson wasn't like that.

He soon found himself getting on his soap box and shouting to people, as the *Yes* men and women passed him by on the precinct: "Don't believe their lies! They have no currency! They have no agreement on Europe! No agreement on church and state. They will bring about a civil war! They are full of insurrectionists,

waiting for the day of vengeance. Vote *No!* Stay safe in the union. Protect your currency. Get rid of them on Thursday. Vote NO!"

Nelson really enjoyed this. It reminded him of some of the disputes he was involved in during his trade union career, and the fun he had had with his comrades. As he shouted, he connected with the passing faces, but he did not stop to argue with them. Most of them he could see were *Yes* men and women. They all had badges or tee shirts on. They had not heard such things before: for the *No* campaign was in the main out of sight.

Along the road some people challenged him, but he kept in the spirit, and threw the words of warning out to the people around him on the street. The dissenting voices were soon behind him. As he turned off to go down Bucannan Street, Nelson thought he should climb the steps outside the Bucannan Gallery, and make a speech there. He guessed this was an area where rallies took place, during the day: for there was a statue there of the first minister of Scotland: Donald Dewar. He read on a poster nearby that it was an area where opera stars sang in the afternoon.

It was not busy at the moment: for the last organised campaign must have moved on. Many people no doubt used it to promote some cause or other. In fact, when he thought about it he had seen it in the press; this was where Labour MP's, and other *No* campaigners had all come up from down south to support the Union, and had stood on these very steps. Nelson MacDonald would do the same.

Before launching into his speech, Nelson looked around at some of the students. He could see they were having lunch or coffee on the steps, chatting and relaxing. It was a lovely day. The sun was shining and there were only one or two clouds above him in the Glasgow sky. You could say that apart from the constitutional issue, life was normal. People were walking by, going back to work, going to the cinema, the shops, travelling onwards to train stations and airports, with a view no doubt of going to other cities and countries.

Nelson voice suddenly cut through the dull sound of the city: "We are the people of the four: The Scottish, the English, the

Irish, the Welsh. We fought the Germans in 1939. We have been through many conflicts together. Our lives are integrated in every way. This is why I am voting *No*. Don't believe the lies they are telling you. They have no currency, no agreement on Europe, no church and state. Brothers and sisters protect your savings. Vote *No* on Thursday!"

"The BBC is quite right to flag up the Irish question, as regards the similarity between Scotland and Ireland. The parallels are nearly exact. In the event of Independence, a struggle would ensue for the identity of Scotland. The different groups facing themselves inside a new nation. With a pariah currency, and much uncertainty about, the scene would be set for an upheaval, and some sort of civil war would inevitably ensue. That indeed is Project Fear for everyone. Having to replace one system, one currency with another, would take more than a decade. Chaos and confusion would be everywhere. First, you have a breakdown in society, then you have a civil war. This is what happens. It happened in Bosnia, Chechnya, Kosova, Ukraine-Russia, and the Crimea. Stay safe in the Union. "

"Two groups facing each other inside one country: that is civil war. No longer, England could be the enemy for the separatists. Scots would be set against Scots. The fight for the soul of the nation would begin on the first day of the new separate state: Unionists, Republicans, believers and non believers, all thrown together to sort it out. That is why I am voting *No*. Everyone, no matter their identity, flourishes in Scotland. We seem to be part of everything: UK, Europe, the World. Brothers and sisters, get rid of the poison in our society, and the poisonous people who agitate against the other side. Vote *No!"*

All the way down Buchanan Street, Nelson MacDonald delivered his sermon to the people of Glasgow. Halfway down the precinct, opposite what used to be a large bookstore, a Television crew from Canada turned up. When they heard him shouting they wanted to film him. He was quite calm as he told their viewers about what was happening to his country. He was thereafter asked if he would do an interview with German TV.

The media were certainly out in force today. Nelson went over to the side of the street, next to the phone shop. There he was asked by a man with a microphone if he would do an interview. He said he was from BBC Scotland. Nelson obliged. However, the short interview was brought to an abrupt end. Knowing that it would be better to have some live action, Nelson caught sight of a bunch of separatist revellers; they were the last lot coming down from their rally. He knew he had to get as many listeners as possible. He nodded to the radio man; he should keep the tape running. Nelson launched into his speech against the separatists.
The young author spotted a middle aged couple walking past on the other side, past the clothes shop, just at the corner of St Vincent Street. They were respectable looking; he could see they were intimidated by the crowd. Many people had been caught up in the campaign and were affected by the mob. He fixed his eyes on them, as he shouted: "I am not political, but the *Yes* campaign wants to separate from the UK, and has no currency agreement to do so. This is dangerous for the economy. You good people who have hard earned savings. Don't do it. Don't risk your hard earn cash. It will soon turn to Euros, and then to dust."

Just as he was telling them this, his eye caught a lady heading back from lunch, she was walking just behind the couple. From her badge he could see that she worked in the post office, situated around the corner. He remembered her face: for he had been in there exchanging things after his trip abroad. She smiled in agreement and nodded over at him. Even though she sold the currency, she obviously didn't fancy the coin from hell.

To keep her smiling, he added: "There is no future in isolationism. They want to take you out of everything. The UK, Europe, the world. Don't go there sister, be part of something bigger."

In the press that morning, it was reported that the German bank said that Scotland would fall into a depression, if they went on their own, without a currency agreement. The writer told the passing faces this: "It is very dangerous; sensible people are worried."

The journalist from Cologne he met admitted to him that he was just as worried as some Scots. Nelson agreed with him: "The problem is that some people think they will get a currency deal; which is not possible, due to the fact that the rest of the UK: England, Wales, Ireland, would be protecting themselves, and their citizens against the whirlwind of economic uncertainty. Many insurrectionists, and revolutionaries have buried themselves in the *Yes* campaign, and wrapped the Scottish flag around them, waiting for the Judgement Day. You can see this on the Internet. The only world leader to support them is Kim Jong-un. That should tell you all you want to know."

He was getting tired and light headed. One kind woman must have spotted this, and went and got him a cup of tea. Nelson really appreciated this: "My mouth is dry with all that shouting." he said as he took the plastic cup from her: "There are always helpers about - I give thanks for that. "

She could see that he was vastly outnumbered, and was trying to show the people, that passed by, they were being deceived by the separatists.

Nelson spotted a happy cheeky face in the crowd. He could tell the man was a foreigner. In fact, it soon became apparent that he was a separatist from Barcelona, from the Catalan region. No doubt he had come over for the day to support his friends here.

As he passed Nelson, he let him have it: "Brothers and sisters, there are some here among you today who have flown in from foreign countries to mix it. Send them back empty handed. Stay safe in the union. Don't let them bring a civil war to these shores. Vote No1"

Later that afternoon, Nelson stood at St Vincent Street, and there caught some more separatists coming down from their afternoon rally. A crowd of waving *Yes* flags soon gathered around him. There he told the crowd about his father, a Scottish soldier who had fought in a Scots regiment. He could see as he spoke most were new Scots, and had no connection to the past. When he was finished, he moved away from the angry faces, over to the shop wall. He noticed one tall well-built fellow looked angry. He

followed him over there. Nelson could see he was a violent man. He and two others, a young skinny lad with an electric cigarette contraption, and an everyday girl presently surrounded him. Although no visible presence of police on the streets, everyone knew they were helped by CCTV. Most people understood that a violent attack could be monitored, and the culprits thereafter apprehended.

The well-built man came up close to him. Nelson waited. As is the way with cowards, he used vile words to try to appeal to other like-minded people nearby. Nelson noticed the crowd behind, moving slowly up and down the famous street, but no one came over. The man cursed again, then moved away. The girl and the skinny lad followed their master. However, Nelson noticed that as they went away the young skinny lad went into his pocket for something. He flicked open his electric cigarette gadget, and fired a laser-beam into his eye. Fortunately, Nelson had on dark glasses: for the sun was strong.

Nelson launched into them, as he pointed at the evildoer: "You see they haven't changed any. You can hear the foul and abusive words of the separatists. Get rid of them on Thursday. Bin them on Thursday. Vote *No*!

The witnesses who were a mixture of shoppers and agitators looked over at the small group, as they disappeared down Buchanan Street. Nelson knew that the separatist campaign office was situated on Hope Street. He noticed this when he walked through the town the other day. He also read about it in the local newspaper: for the were in dispute with a neighbouring travel agent, who had refused to back their cause. Someone wrote in saying that the separatists were trying to put them out of business.

You could not say that it was a busy election office; one or two going in or out of it. In view of the many campaigners on the streets today, that was surprising. He could see from looking into their office that it gave out leaflets and other party propaganda, to anyone and everyone who enquired.

As soon as he got outside their door, Nelson turned round. He looked across the road to where there was a notice inviting

people to visit a seafood restaurant. Then he opened up again. He started shouting against their cause: "Don't believe their lies!"

It was not an area where people gathered, even though it was on the main street; there was not any bus stop close by, pub or restaurant. He noticed one or two people looked over at him from across the road. Two lads dressed in dark fashionable clothes certainly shouted something over at him. However, the noise of the traffic drowned whatever it was out they said. Just then, a young couple came out of the office and got a fright when they heard the union man there shouting. Like most people in the city - since the start of the referendum campaign - they thought that the separatists had turned Glasgow into an exclusive republican city.

All the time, Nelson handed out the leaflets - the ones he had picked up at the Better Together table. They lasted him well; he just had a few left. As he headed home, he remembered the citizens who had encouraged him. They were quite unassuming. They were ordinary in appearance; they came up to him after his speech to say things like: "Good for you. You are quite right. I agree with you."

There was no doubt about it, the *No* campaigners had been intimidated by the separatists. They tried to browbeat them in offices and on the street. They were always online, and active in spreading their poison wherever they went. However, their hate was against their fellows Scots, even though they maintained that it was a hate campaign against the Westminster system, and the English dominant based media. It rebounded on them though. They used the poor to shield their hostile words. They were active in schools, as well as in factories. Some people pretended to Vote for them, just to get rid of them.

It is true to say, this was a time when Scots were against Scots; the foreigners who looked on were bemused. The desire to bring about a civil war was obvious. Poison had a way of infesting the community at every level. To kindle the fire you had to first poison the atmosphere, then offer the solution: end to the Union.

Nelson MacDonald walked to the station to get his train back to the south side. When he approached Gordon Street, he spotted

the separatists again; they had set up a table there outside, opposite the chip shop. He gave it one more go. Nelson walked up to them and, as he did so, he shouted his cry once more to the late afternoon Glasgow sky. Some city dwellers stopped to see what was going on. Some even came out of offices nearby: "Don't believe their lies!"

Chapter 7

Nelson MacDonald voted, but he could not stay in on the eve of the result. He did not want to listen to people arguing on TV. Like all of its citizens, he now waited for the result. It was due to be announced in the morning, although before that it would be known. It was a strange night; he wondered what to do. Suddenly, he got an idea. Nelson went to that bar again in West Nile Street, and there he bought himself a beer.

A tall well built man, who was a regular came into the bar around ten o'clock, dressed in a Scottish Rugby shirt. He dragged a trolley full of beer behind him. He told the barmaid, he was ready to celebrate. He maintained that he was the chieftain of a Highland clan, and to prove it he brought with him the chieftain's walking stick. It was all very bizarre. Nelson smiled at him, and went and sat outside. It was cold there, but he had on his jacket and scarf.

Nelson thought he should share the historic moment. He Skyped a friend in Sweden. He knew she loved the arts. Unfortunately, she was not in, so he left a video message for her: "As you can see, I am sitting outside a bar in the city centre of Glasgow. Well, by now all of the citizens have voted. We now await our future: the result of the Scottish referendum. The result should

be known in the early hours of the morning. I can say to you that the sky above is dramatic, but I cannot read the signs, so no predictions there. I just hope that all goes well."

Nelson hung up. He noticed an email message pop up in his inbox from a friend in Nice, France. She was a kind English soul. The text read: 'The next time we meet, we may be from different countries.'

Nelson put his trust in God and man. He replied: 'Always friends, never strangers."

Music from the novel, from the album Wall of Fun, *Playing with Hatred*:

Download music from:

https://walkerjohna.wordpress.com/about/

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